

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System
Military Order of the Purple Heart
7180 Highland Drive 118-VH
Building 1, Room 6023W
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Combat
Wounded
Veterans



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MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART | CHAPTER 455

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PURPLE HEART NEWSLETTER

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COMMANDER – LOUIS LaCIVITA

ASST. EDITOR – DAN WILHELM
CHIEF OF STAFF - HARRY CLARK



Annual Gift

Commander of Chapter 455 Lou LaCivita presenting Carol Singer, Property Manager and daughter of the late Sid Singer, founder and director of the Homeless Veteran Place of Washington Blvd. with an annual check from The Military Order of the Purple Heart.

VAVS Training

Volunteers from the Greater Pittsburgh area left for Erie for 4 days; Tuesday, June 14 to Friday, June 17. It was the 11th annual VISN 4 VAVS Representative/Deputy Representative Training.

Two members from Chapter 455 attended-on the bottom row far right Beverly Wilhelm and the back row tall Joe Mlinac in the center.



Female Special Operators in Combat

In a controversial move early this year, the Army created a new avenue for women to serve with front line combat units in some of the most specialized and covert missions. The so-called “Cultural Support Teams” are attached to Special Forces and Ranger units to interface with the female population to gain vital intelligence and provide social outreach.

“When I send an [SF team] in to follow up on a Taliban hit...wouldn't it be nice to have access to about 50 percent of that target population—the women?” said Maj. Gen. Bennet Sacolick, commander of the Army Special Warfare Center and School, which runs the CST program.

“And now we're doing that with huge success,” Sacolick said. “They are in Afghanistan right now and reviews are off the charts. They're doing great.”

So far, nearly 30 of the female CST Soldiers are deployed to the war zone,

working in villages and towns that the commandos have cleared.

“They're supposed to be used on secure target areas,” Sacolick said. “I don't want them fighting their way to a target.”

While the Army has assigned women to front-line units in the past during searches of female civilians and detainees, the move by USASOC formalizes what some advocates have been hoping for in terms of opening up combat arms units to women .

The Soldiers assigned to the Cultural Support Teams aren't required to endure all the training of a Ranger or SF trooper, but they do have to learn advanced weapons handling and even fast-roping. Though three separate nine-day assessments so far, the Special Warfare Center and School has about a 50 percent attrition rate, officials say. Those who make it through a six-week training course that teaches the Soldiers regional culture, intelligence gathering and small-unit combat tactics, officials say.

“I place less emphasis on the immediate physical standards,” Sacolick said. “What I don't compromise on is intellect. I'm looking for smart kids.”

Though USASOC will consider female Soldiers-NCOs and junior officers—from any MOS, they are especially interested in those from health care career fields, including nurse midwife, as well as military police and military intelligence, according to the perquisites and requirements detailed on the Army Special Operations Command website.



Army Special Operations Command has deployed its first female Soldiers assigned to commando units in Afghanistan, and military officials are assessing their initial performance in theater as “off the charts.”

VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM - HEINZ DIVISION

Ribbon cutting dedication ceremony - September 30, 2011

AMBULATORY CARE CENTER



Energizing Excellent Health Care *Changes worth getting excited about*

Some highlights of the new Ambulatory Care Center:

- All new furnishings, including new dental and audiology equipment and exam tables for primary care.
- 375 additional parking spaces.
- Expansion of the current canteen to improve flow and increase seating capacity.
- Full utilization of the rooftop space, including a healing garden for the adult day care program and a mobility practice area for the rehabilitation program.
- Motion sensor lighting throughout the building.
- Pursuing silver LEED certification, a mark of environmentally responsible building design.

By the Numbers

\$40 million:
Estimated construction cost

117,000:
Square Feet

Three:
Floors

1,100:
Parking spaces available post-construction

One:
new stoplight at the entrance on Delafield Road

What's Inside?

Basement:
Utility space

Floor 1:
Physical rehabilitation, audiology, dental, adult day care, outpatient pharmacy, patient education and prosthetics

Floor 2:
Primary care services

**ELECTION REPORT
2011—2012**

Commander	Louis LaCivita
Senior Vice Commander	John Abram
Junior Vice Commander	James Lang
Adjutant	James Lang
Finance Officer	Joseph Serenka
Judge Advocate	Robert Bucholtz
Dept. Executive Committeeman	Dominic Cersosimo
Dept. Alt. Exec Committeeman	James McGrath
Sergeant-At-Arms	Oliver McClelland
Trustee 3 Year	Alvin Coles
Trustee 2 Year	Gregory Daley
Trustee 1 Year	Joseph Mlinac
Service Officer	James Jablonowski
Welfare Officer	Howard Eichner
Historian	Weldon Luck
Chaplain	Dan Wilhelm
Americanism Officer	Dan Wilhelm

VETERANS' VICTORY

An appeals court orders the services they deserve

The U.S. government is failing to give military veterans who have service-connected mental illnesses proper treatment in a timely manner. This neglect is not new, but it has gotten worse as more soldiers are seeking help.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals properly condemned the disgraceful state of mental health care in the Department of Veterans Affairs and ordered improvements. The court said it intervened because Congress and the White had “so completely and chronically failed” to give veterans the treatment they deserve.

The court blasted what it called the VA’s “egregious problems” and “unchecked incompetence” in delivering mental health services to returning veterans. It said care for soldiers who suffer from severe depression or PTSD is so routinely bad it violates the Constitution’s due-process guarantees. The judges said more than 84,000 veterans are on waiting lists for mental-health care and that on a typical day 18 veterans kill themselves.

The ruling overturns a lower-court decision against two veterans groups that seek to force systemic change at the VA. Rather than pursue further appeals, the VA should finally give veterans the treatment and benefits they are owed in return for their service to the country.

NOTE:

We are asking our members to submit an outstanding Patriot who has donated a lot of time and energy in helping our veterans. The Patriot will be featured in our Chapter MOPH newsletter. We would like to get at least one Patriot for each quarter.

Please submit a picture and a brief history of the Patriot.



Lifeline 2011 © 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals

BOOSTER'S-JAN. 1, 2011 TO DEC. 31, 2011

Mike & Veronica Blazeovich

Charles & Irene Hall

Wayne Donalson

William & Linda Hyslop

SPECIAL BOOSTER'S

John & Carolyn Abram

Dave & Janet Alden

John & Joan Alden

Mr. & Mrs. William Aronson

Edward & Susan Barker

George & Mary Ann Bigelow

Conrad Black & Marilyn Obrien

Dick & Debbie Bostard

Robert & Florence Bucholtz

William Carr

Vance & Margaret Carter

Dominic & Betty Cersosimo

Phillip Cerussi

Anne & Roche-Conners

James & Renae Costabile

Andrew & Doroty Cherok

Michael & Michele Cummings

Greg & Barbara Daley

Howard & Edna Eichner

Ray & Pearl Fritz

Lou & Gloria Gambogi

John & Donna Gochnour

Joseph & Patty Henry

Emil Hosko

Ira C. & Jeannie Houck Jr.

Lenny Kasubick

Joe & Lois Kenney

James & Juleen Kephart

Dennis & Marsha King

Frank & Anne Kravetz

Larry Kushner

Lou & Dolly Lacivita

Wayne & Karen Lamping

Robert Lakes

Jim & Betsy Lang

Joe Laplace

Michael Laskowski Jr,

M/Sgt Leroy Lewis

Massaro Corporation

Steve Massaro

Joe & Mlinac & Donna Madeja

Charles Mancuso

Oliver McClelland

Col. Alex & Molly McClinchie

Harry McCracken

Darryl Merrison

James Pella & Michele Hanson

Gary & Patricia Ratford

Michael & Michele Ratway

Ernie & Nancy Rivers

Stanley & Mary Rozanski

Paul Sager

Chester & M. Jane Sattiaux

Joe & Anna Serenka

Robert & Peggy Smith

Mark & Nancy Sutton

Terry & Ruth Swindell

Larry & Mary Uplinger

Robert & Ruth Vance

Nicholas Viglione

Ed & Joan Vogel

Ed & Cheryl Werle

John & Patty Wright

**Newsletter
UPDATE**

*Subscribe and help
defray costs!*

Our chapter is still asking our members again to support our boosters and special boosters send **\$6.00** and we will list your name and your spouse name for the upcoming year 2011. If you can give more you will be listed as a special booster.

**Advertise
With Us!**

We also are asking anyone that would like to place an ad in our newsletter there we be no charge but a donation would be greatly appreciated.

TAPS



**Bernard Brooks
Lester Bursey
Matthew Gaspar
Raymond Hartman
John Hribar
William Stewart**

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Marine Afghanistan Vet to Receive the Medal of Honor

For the first time since Vietnam War a living Marine will be awarded the Medal of Honor



Former Cpl. Dakota Meyer will receive the nation's highest military award for actions on Sept. 8, 2008, in a small Afghan village near the border of Pakistan, according to a report July 19 on the website of Leatherneck, a publication of the Marine Corps Association.

Meyer, who left the Marine Corps in June 2010, was nominated for the medal after risking his life to race into the kill zone of a firefight to find three missing Marines and a Navy corpsman, Marine Corps Times reported after confirming the Leatherneck report.

The four men were already dead and stripped of their gear and equipment, according to the report. Along with friendly Afghan soldiers Meyer got the bodies away from the combat area where they could be flown out.

That a living Marine was in line for the Medal of Honor has been known since last November, when then-Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James Conway announced during a visit to Camp Pendleton, California that one had been nominated.

Meyer's actions occurred during the controversial battle near the village of Ganjgal, Afghanistan, where Meyer was serving as part of a joint embedded training team to mentor Afghan forces. His patrol was ambushed by a large insurgent force which rained down AK-47 and RPG fire on the training team.

A reporter embedded with the unit at the time told of desperate calls for close air or artillery support that never came. Just a few days after the attack, an angry Meyer was quoted as saying that the commanders decision not to

order artillery support "basically screwed our guys over. They expect us to bring stuff to the fight, and [the commanders] didn't give it to us."

Investigators later reprimanded three Army officers for their conduct in the bloody ambush.

Two Marines with Meyer on Sept. 8 were awarded the Navy Cross-after the Medal of Honor the highest award for valor a Marine can be awarded. Capt. Ademola Fabayo and Staff Sgt. Juan Rodriguez-Chavez were presented the medals for helping retrieve the bodies.

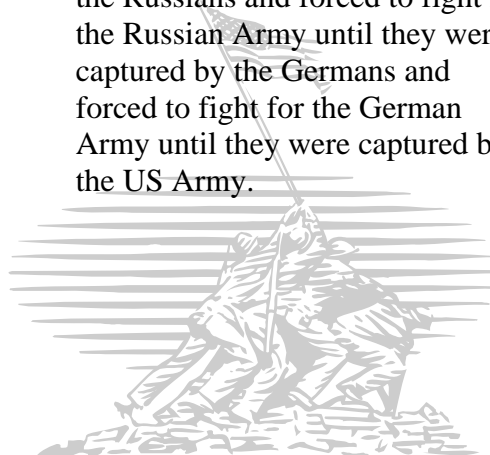
The last Marine to be awarded the Medal of Honor was Cpl. Jason Dunham, who was presented the medal posthumously for sacrificing himself to save the lives of two other Marines in Karbala, Iraq. Dunham used his helmet and body to cover a grenade dropped by an insurgent that had attacked him at a checkpoint.

The last living Marine to be awarded the medal was Sgt. Maj. Allan J. Kellogg, who received the award for combat actions on March 11, 1970, in Quang Nam Province, Vietnam.



Very Interesting World War II Trivia

1. The 1st German serviceman killed in World War II was killed by the Japanese ([China, 1937](#)), the 1st American serviceman killed was killed by the Russians ([Finland, 1940](#)); highest ranking American killed was Lt. Gen. Lesley McHair, killed by the US Air Corps. So much for the Allies.
2. The youngest U.S. serviceman was 12-year-old [Calvin Graham, USN](#). He was wounded and given a Dishonorable Discharge for lying about his age. His benefits were later restored by act of Congress.
3. At the time of Pearl Harbor, the top US Navy command was called CINCUS, the shoulder patch of the US Army's 45 infantry division was the Swastika, and Hitler's private train was named the 'Amerika.' All three were changed for PR purposes.
4. More servicemen died in the Air Corps than the Marine Corps. While completing the required 30 missions, your chance of being killed was 71%.
5. Generally speaking, there was no such thing as an average fighter pilot. You were either an ace or a target. For instance, Japanese Ace ([Hiroshi Nishizawa](#)) shot down over 80 planes.
6. When allied armies reached the Rhine, the 1st thing men did was pee in it. This was pretty universal from the lowest private to Winston Churchill (who made a big show of it) and Gen. Patton (who had himself photographed in the act.)
7. It was common practice on fighter planes to load every 5th round with a tracer round to aid in aiming. This was a mistake. Tracers had different ballistics so (at long range) if your tracers were hitting the target 80% of your rounds were missing. Worse yet tracers instantly told your enemy he was under fire and from which direction. Worst of all was the practice of loading a string of tracers at the end of the belt to tell you were out of ammo. This was definitely not something you wanted to tell the enemy. Units that stopped using tracers saw their success rate nearly double and their loss rate go down.
8. German Me-264 bombers were capable of bombing New York City, but they decided it wasn't worth the effort.
9. German submarine U-120 was sunk by a malfunctioning toilet.
10. Among the 1st 'Germans' captured at Normandy were several Koreans. They had been forced to fight for the Japanese Army until they were captured by the Russians and forced to fight for the Russian Army until they were captured by the Germans and forced to fight for the German Army until they were captured by the US Army.



CHAPTER 455 MEETINGS

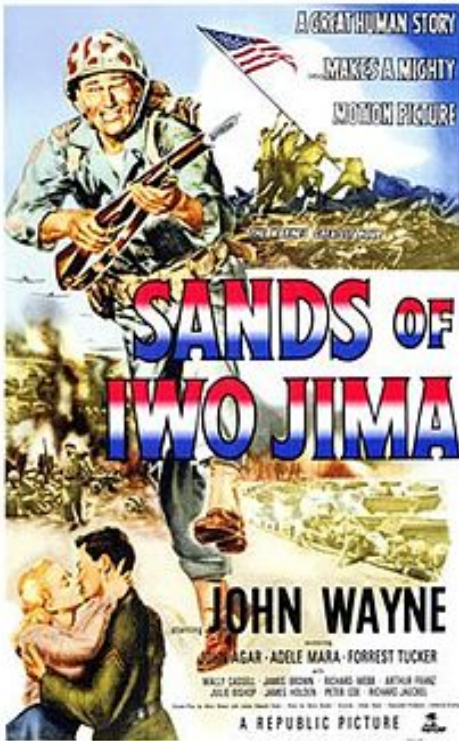
Our meetings are held the last Wednesday of the month at the VA Hospital at Highland Drive at 10 am sharp. Our office is in building one, 6th floor, room 6023w. Recently we have been having our meetings on the 2nd floor in room 2010W in building one because we have more space. After the meeting a lunch will be provided.

If you need more information please call 412-954-5166 Mon.—Wed. from 8 am to 12 noon and ask for Dan Wilhelm.



How John Wayne Saved the Marines

Tho' never served in uniform, he did a hell of a job for our armed forces morale and national pride



John Wayne was born on May 24, 1907 (age 104) in Winterset, Iowa, as Marion Morrison, weighing 13 pounds. His birthplace is a museum. There is a guest book, opened to a page with the entry, in the entrant's handwriting, Name: Ronald Reagan, Address: 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington DC.

John Wayne was a truly great American, this is how he saved the Marine Corps. In the aftermath of World War II, the psychological let-

down after years of war and bloodshed, the huge demobilization of servicemen, the desire to slash military spending, and the antipathy towards the military by left-wingers in the Democrat Party all combined in a call by a number of Senators and Congressmen to abolish the Marine Corps.

In this, they were supported by the Doolittle Board, created by Harry Truman, which called for the Marine Corps to be "disbanded" as a separate military force, and "unified" with the Army (yes, the board was headed by an Air Force General, Jimmy Doolittle.)

A group of enterprising Marines-you can always depend on Marines to be enterprising – with Hollywood connections, thought a movie made around the most famous photograph of World War II, Joe Rosenthal's of the Marines raising the flag on Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima, could help sway public opinion against disbandment.

The approached legendary director Allan Dwan, who agreed to commission a script. The movie was to be called "The Sands of Iwo Jima," and everybody agreed only one man could play the lead role of Sergeant Stryker: John Wayne.

To the great surprise, Wayne turned it down. He didn't like the script, and he wasn't enamored of the character of Stryker. The Marines came to the rescue again. The Marine Corps Commandant, General Clifton B. Cates, got on an airplane and flew from Washington to California to personally request Wayne make the picture. When General Cates explained the stakes involved-the very existence of the Marine Corps-Wayne immediately changed his mind, promising the general he would do everything in his power to have the movie be a success.

The Sands of Iwo Jima was released in 1949 and quickly became a runaway blockbuster, with millions of moviegoers packing every theater showing it. Wayne was nominated for a Best Actor Oscar, establishing him as Hollywood's Number One box-office star.

The Doolittle Board folded its tent, and no politician on Capitol Hill ever again said a word about disbanding the Marines.

To further celebrate his birthday, here's a treat and some advice. The treat is this link: A biography of John Wayne written by Ronald Reagan, in the October 1979 Reader's Digest. The advice is this: Don't ever trust a man who doesn't like John Wayne.